



SERMON REFLECTION GUIDE

Joy to the World, Part 2: Joy When You are Stressed - Philippians 2:12-30 - December 7, 2025

SERMON OUTLINE

Intro - What are the things that lead to holiday stress? Why are we more overwhelmed than ever when we are supposed to be practicing hope, peace, joy and love? Money's tight? Shopping is a hassle? Family is complicated? Grief is heavy?

Paul teaches us in **Philippians 2:12-30** that we can choose to be joyful. He writes powerful words that are even more powerful when we consider the immense stress he was under. **Philippians 2:17-18** - I am glad and rejoice with you all. Likewise, you should also be glad and rejoice with me.

Illustration: My grandmother & great-aunt playing dress-up as older women on a hard day. When our circumstances threaten to drown us, can we find joy from within as a life preserver?

His interactions towards joy (**v. 17-18**) are in light of the possibility that could be "poured out as a drink offering" - in other words, the threat of execution is a very real possibility.

The first section (**v. 12-18**) is full of instruction.

- **Work out your own salvation** with fear and trembling (**v. 12**)

Not legalism! We can only "work out" what God has "worked in" (**v. 13**).

Paul says a similar thing in the opposite order in **Ephesians 2:8-10**. Our salvation is from God, and yet we have a responsibility to work it out, or live it out.

- Do all things **without grumbling or disputing** (**v. 14**)

We are a country marked by these two terrible attributes. As Christians, we cannot both display joy and grumbling.

Holiday Challenge - respond to all grumbling/disputing with joy/gladness.

- To shine as blameless **lights** in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation (**v. 15**)

Object lesson: the lighthouse that might call in wayward/lost ships out of the chaotic sea of sin and rebellion. That lighthouse is our obedience and joy!

Two Big Joy Helpers!

A. The Partnership of Friends

- **Timothy** (**v. 19-24**) - Timothy is a gospel minister on Paul's behalf towards Philippi.

- **Epaphroditus** (**v. 25-30**) - Epaphroditus is a gospel money-carrier on Philippi's behalf towards Paul.

Together, they are as close as *family* to Paul ("son" & "brother") - Timothy will be genuinely concerned for the Philippians (**v. 20**) and Epaphroditus nearly died to serve Paul (**v. 27**)!

The instruction? Receive them with JOY! (**v. 28-29**) - the best of godly friends produce joy in us!

B. The Pleasure of a Father

God who works in you...*for his good pleasure*. (**v. 13**)

God works in your life to bring you into a fuller and fuller expression of faith and obedience and Christlikeness... he does it *cheerfully*.

Illustration: we are "*children of God*" (**v. 15**) - God is a loving father who loves to help his kids.

Conclusion:

A tracking of God's joy playing out throughout the birth, baptism, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ PLUS the joy that we receive when we are justified by faith.



SERMON REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What about the holidays produces stress? What about the holidays produces joy?
2. Can you control which of those two you give the most time and attention to?
3. Is joy really a choice?
4. What is the relationship between verse 12 and 13?
5. How are you doing with “grumbling and disputing”? How does that affect your joy?
6. Do you have a Timothy or Epaphroditus in your life?
7. Do you really believe that God works in your life joyfully?